



THE BRITISH MAGAZINE FOR THE HARLEY-DAVIDSON® RIDER

**SuperTwins**

# SuperTwins

Issue Twenty Five

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■ £3.00

[www.supertwins.co.uk](http://www.supertwins.co.uk)

**Bulldog Bash**

Top Bash - No Bull

**HDRCGB Shipley**

**Freewheels 2000**

**Buell S1**

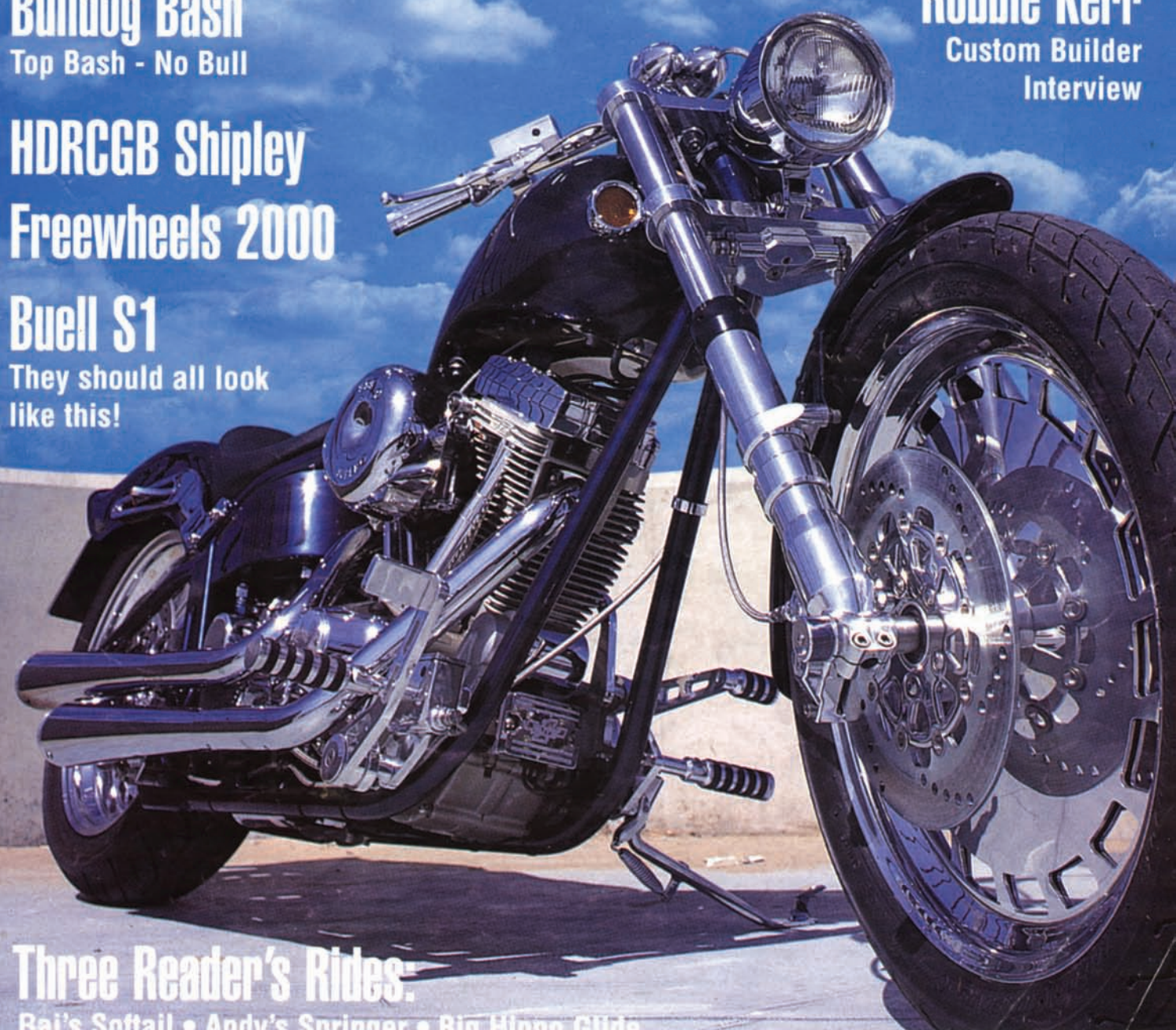
They should all look  
like this!

**Hammerhead**

Long time comin' but worth the wait

**Robbie Kerr**

Custom Builder  
Interview



**Three Reader's Rides:**

Raj's Softail • Andy's Springer • Big Hippo Glide

**5 pages of Bikes for Sale**

**jazz**  
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HARLEY-DAVIDSON MAGAZINE HARLEY-DAVIDSON MAGAZINE HARLEY-DAVIDSON MAGAZINE





# ROBBIE KERR

## CUSTOM BIKE BUILDER

Text & Photos: Brian Richmond

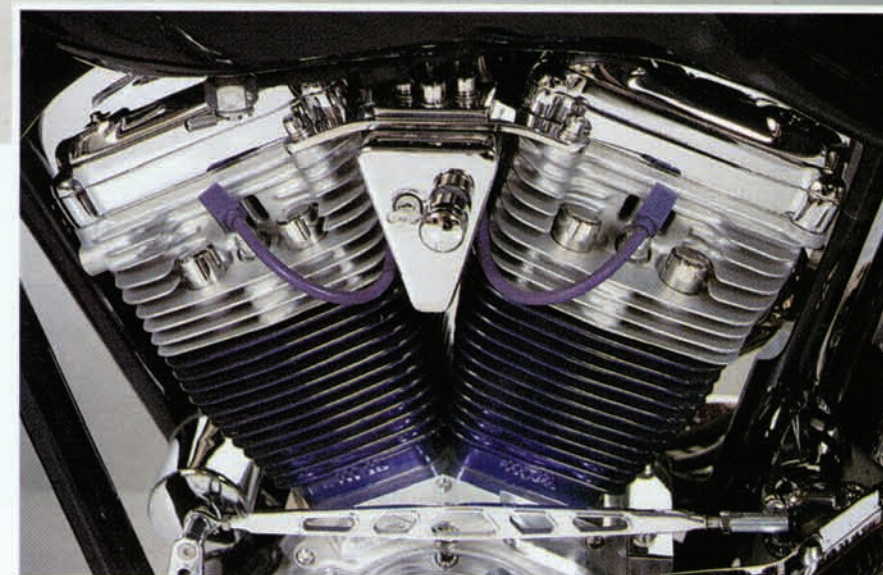
Robbie Kerr is a name that may not be familiar to the majority of Harley riders, but up in Scotland he has been building a reputation as a custom bike builder of note. One of our guys happened to see one of Robbie's creations and got very excited about it, telling us it was a work of art and one of the finest bikes he'd seen. Not content with just photographing the bike, he spoke to Robbie, its builder and got the lowdown on how it all came about...

Every country around the world is famous

for one thing or another. Now, the way I look at it, out of all the countries from the very tiny to the absolutely vast super-power nations, Scotland must lie way up front. Why? Well, I would say although our head count is small in numbers, we have achieved more than the rest of the world put together. Call me a Nationalist pig if you want, but look at it this way. Who invented the drug that cured everything, Penicillin? Sir Alexander Fleming. What about the telephone? Alexander Graham Bell. Television? Jock Logie Baird. Tarmac? Jock

Loudon Macadam. Need I say more? Robbie Kerr, what's he famous for? Being the best Harley builder in the country. How did he get this reputation? Well, I'm going to tell you.

Five years ago, Robbie bought his first Harley. After riding it through the summer he decided to chop it, bringing it up to show-winning standards. Being a lover of real American customs, he just built better and better chops and eventually gained a reputation for outstanding workmanship.



So, he began building custom bikes to order and, as they say, has never looked back.

**SuperTwins:** Where did you get the inspiration to build this belter?

**Robbie:** I don't know. It's been an

evolution out of all the bikes I've built in the past all coming together. It's just an idea I came up with, something that looks like it came straight out of a comic, rather than something that looks real. I've had people coming up to me in petrol stations asking me, 'Is that real?' That's the sort of response I wanted. Everything big and

beefy. When the back tyre came, I wanted to build everything around the bike in proportion with the tyre rather than having a bike with just one big back tyre like a lot of others that are kicking about and I needed to build something a bit different.

You can pick up any custom catalogue and flick through all the bikes and be able to tell that the front end comes from here, the mudguards from here, the tanks from here, etc, etc. You can see which parts came out of which catalogues. I wanted to build a bike that you couldn't find in any catalogue!

**ST:** First impression of this gorgeous bike is that it looks very much like a muscle bike; beefy yet futuristic.

**Robbie:** For me it still has an old-style Harley look, a sort of 50's oldie kind of look, but with an up-to-date sort of streetfighter look which I've also built in the past. And I suppose because I like building streetfighters, there's a hidden influence in there.

**ST:** Tell us a bit about building your first Harley and how you quickly learned from your mistakes to enjoy it enough to get to this stage

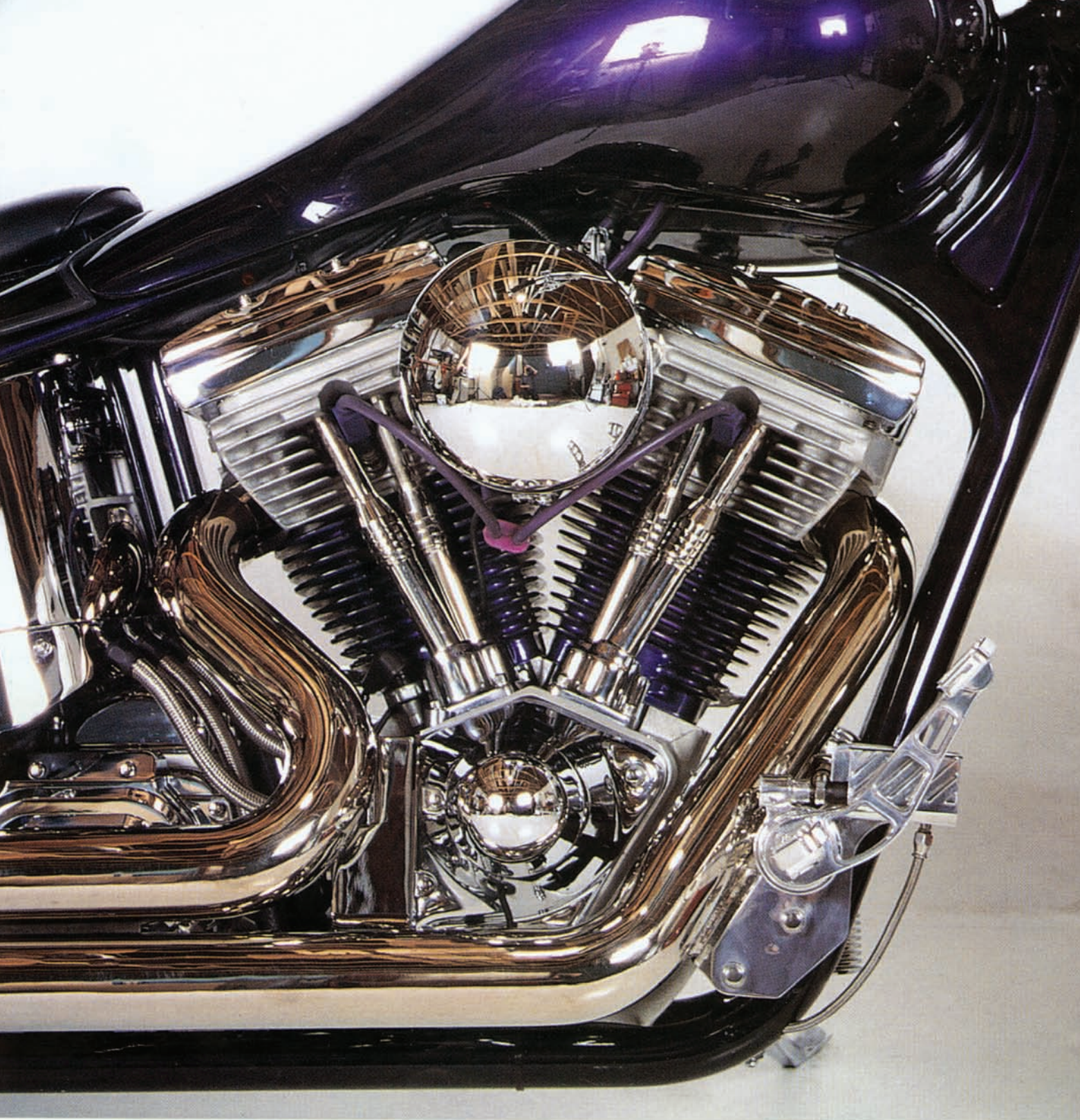
**Robbie:** Well, I always believe that the secret in building good customs is to keep everything in proportion. If you're using a big Harley motor, then 1 1/2 inch tubing is the material for the frame, especially since 99% of the time you're going to offset the gearbox and stick a nice chunky tyre on the back. The same up front; a decent sized tyre bigger than standard etc. Basically, that's all there is to it. The hardest thing with the hundreds of thousands of Harleys going around today is coming up with something original, that's the challenge.

With this particular frame, again it was 1 1/2 inch tubing which I designed and then gave it to a guy called John Parry who then built it. He said he'd never do another one because of the work involved in it. I think what was actually wrong was that John had mis-quoted me when he priced it and the job of building it took twice as long as he thought.

**ST:** Tell us about those solid one-off wheels that you built

**Robbie:** Well the reason I designed and





built them was because the look I had in my head was basically just not available to buy. There are a lot of people who just flick through catalogues and magazines until they see what they want. On the other hand, I'm more likely to sit back and think up my own look. If it's not available then I'll get it made. The beauty of my wheels are that they were designed with bolt-on rims. At the moment they are sitting as 7 1/4" but I could take them up to 9 or 10 inch if need be. The centres are my design and the rims were bought.

**ST:** What about the front end? That must be the biggest front tyre on any Harley in the country.

**Robbie:** Oh aye, easily.

**ST:** How's it handle?

**Robbie:** One of the most important things to me is handling. I mean the bike's only been on the road two weeks and I've done two thousand miles. I build my bikes to ride and enjoy them. I'm not into putting bikes into trailers and towing them to a show. I build them to ride and enjoy riding them. The biggest success story for me is how it handles and drives and this bike rides like a dream and you'd never imagine you had all that rubber up front. When I built the back end, it's deliberately kicked out way over the



left hand side for clearance and I got special one-off exhausts made out of 1/4 wall thickness to add on the weight to the right, so it balances it out, and they weigh a ton!

**ST:** That tank, as well as being stretched it has a futuristic kind of look.

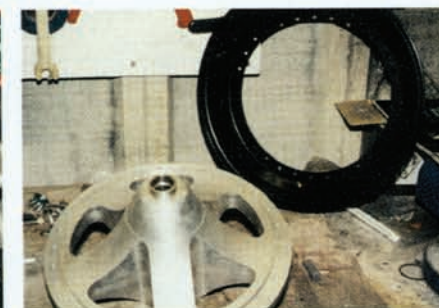
**Robbie:** It does. That again was all out of my head. It was taken down to a bloke in Dumfries who made a complete arse of it twice and we nearly came to blows a few times. Everything else on the bike seemed to go quite smoothly. OK, you get your usual wee problems, that's expected. The tank was a nightmare and we'll leave it at that...

**ST:** You're the first bloke I've met that's designed the whole bike using a computer.

**Robbie:** Yeah, the whole front end, wheels, frame was all drawn up using software called Autocad 2000, then one of my mates transferred it on to 3D Pro-Engineer down at his workplace. Everything was drawn, right down to the wheel spacers, all of it done in 3D so I could get a good look at it before anything was done.

**ST:** Amazing. I like the hidden rear wheel spindle. It's so tidy.

**Robbie:** Aye, just another simple wee idea that worked well. When you go over the bike there are a lot of nice wee technical bits and pieces that are so simply designed they just add that extra finish. Take the bottom yoke for instance; no horrible cuts



in the aluminium for tightening. To hold your forks in place a nice, neat little plug that goes in with a grub screw to hide it. First of all I thought about making half a dozen of them and every time you wanted one out, you had to drill it and stick an easy-out in it, and that was it ruined, until I eventually thought of the idea of the wee spring. So when you slacken the wee grub screw, it just pops out.

**ST:** And that brings us to the colour.

**Robbie:** Cadburys Purple. I love purple and I've looked and looked and since I built my Harris Magnum in 1992 and this is the closest I've got to it. I love it!

**ST:** Robbie, the bike has been built for just two weeks and in that time you've been to two shows and cleaned up and now have more trophies than a trophy shop. I know you're emigrating to Canada and there's a lot of people who are going to be sad to see you go. What are your plans with the bike over there?

**Robbie:** Enjoy the good weather over there for a change and clock up thousands of miles. I hope to open up my own Harley shop and start building custom Harleys to order. So watch this space!

**ST:** I'd like to thank you Robbie for knocking back the opposition and letting SuperTwins have the honour of being the first to capture your beautiful creation on film and good luck to you in Canada

## SuperTech

<b>OWNER:</b>	Robbie Kerr
<b>LOCATION:</b>	Hamilton, Scotland-Now Vancouver, Canada
<b>FABRICATION:</b>	Owner & Davy at Swona
<b>YEAR/MAKE:</b>	2000 One-off Softail Evo
<b>ASSEMBLY:</b>	Owner
<b>CHROMING:</b>	London Chroming Company
<b>ENGINE REBUILDER:</b>	Owner
<b>IGNITION:</b>	Headquarters
<b>DISPLACEMENT:</b>	93 cubic inches
<b>LOWER END, BALANCING &amp; PISTONS:</b>	S&S
<b>CASES:</b>	Delkron
<b>HEADS:</b>	STD/John McKean
<b>CAM:</b>	Headquarters 23
<b>LIFTERS:</b>	Harley Davidson
<b>CARBURETTOR:</b>	Mikuni 42
<b>AIR CLEANER:</b>	Owner/ J.McKean
<b>EXHAUST PIPES:</b>	Owner/Swona
<b>TRANSMISSION:</b>	Delkron cases/1999 internals
<b>PAINTING &amp; MOULDING:</b>	Owner
<b>PAINTS:</b>	Performance Paints/House of Colour
<b>FRAME:</b>	Cobra Builder- John Parry
<b>MODIFICATION:</b>	11/2" tubing designed by Owner
<b>HANDLEBARS:</b>	Owner/Swona/J.McKean
<b>CONTROLS:</b>	OMP
<b>FENDERS:</b>	One-off Swona/Owner
<b>HEADLIGHT:</b>	H Winds Taillight- Colin Black
<b>FORWARD PEGS:</b>	Techno Plus
<b>ELECTRICS:</b>	Owner
<b>PETROL TANK:</b>	Owner
<b>OIL TANK:</b>	John Parry
<b>SEAT:</b>	Owner/Alan Hutton
<b>MIRRORS:</b>	OMP Grips- John McKean
<b>FORKS:</b>	Owner/John McKean
<b>TRIPLE TREES:</b>	Owner/Colin Black
<b>WHEELS:</b>	Front 43/4"x15" Rear 71/4"x15" One-off
<b>BRAKES:</b>	Front Harrison/OMP Rear Owner/J.McKean